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UNICEF report on the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit

Summary

In accordance with Executive Board decision 2001/4, the present report summarizes the response of UNICEF to the recommendations contained in recent reports and notes of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) that are directly relevant to UNICEF. The six reports and one note included in this report were issued by the JIU from September 2013 through December 2014.

* E/ICEF/2015/4.

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I. Introduction

1. The Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) annually issues reports and notes addressed to the executive heads of United Nations organizations that have accepted the Unit's statute. Each report or note contains a series of recommendations for consideration by either the executive heads or the legislative/governing bodies of the organizations (see list of reports and recommendations in annex 1). The UNICEF report to its Executive Board provides, inter alia, (a) a brief overview of the UNICEF response to relevant reports issued by the JIU from September 2013 through December 2014; and (b) comments on JIU recommendations that have been directed to the Executive Board for consideration (see annex 2). The complete reports and notes of the JIU may be obtained through the JIU website (www.unjiu.org) or through the hyperlinked titles of each report in section II of the present document.

2. Since submission of the previous report (E/ICEF/2014/9) to the Executive Board at its annual session of 2014, UNICEF has continued to work with the JIU on various reviews conducted under its auspices and to follow up on the recommendations contained in the reports. This interaction on issues of common interest has increased the relevance of JIU reports, improved the implementation of their recommendations and enhanced transparency. Furthermore, member organizations of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination have continued to provide consolidated responses to various JIU reports.

II. Overview of Joint Inspection Unit reports and recommendations

3. The six JIU reports and one JIU note of direct relevance to UNICEF are summarized below. Additional comments are provided on each report and the relevant recommendations.

A. Review of records and archives management in the United Nations (JIU/REP/2013/2)

4. The objective of this review is to assess whether the current set of United Nations policies and procedures, and the related organizational arrangements, provide the conditions for effective records and archives management (RAM) at headquarters, as well as in the field. The review also aims to identify areas requiring improvement within respective RAM practices across the United Nations system.

UNICEF comments

5. UNICEF agrees that this topic is of critical importance to UNICEF, as well as the wider United Nations system, and is interested in participating and following the same principles as defined by the United Nations family.

B. Review of selection and appointment process for United Nations Resident Coordinators, including preparation, training and support provided for their work (JIU/REP/2013/3)

6. The objective of the review is to assess the operation of the present selection and appointment process for United Nations Resident Coordinators, and the effectiveness and efficiency of the related institutional support mechanisms.

UNICEF comments

7. UNICEF welcomes the report and its recommendations. UNICEF has been working closely with the United Nations Development Operations Coordination Office, as a contributing Inter-Agency Advisory Panel member, to ensure that enhancements to the Standard Operating Procedures focus on furthering transparency, fairness, inclusivity, and rigour in the selection and appointment process. Incremental progress on these aspects has been noted since the release of the report.

C. Review of the management of implementing partners in United Nations system organizations (JIU/REP/2013/4)

8. The report aims to provide a review of the methods and practices used by United Nations organizations across the system to select and manage implementing partners for programme/project delivery. The review further aims to identify strengths and weaknesses in current practices, and explores areas for further improvement for the effective and efficient management of implementing partners.

UNICEF comments

9. UNICEF welcomes the JIU report and agrees with the overall guiding principles identified through the recommendations, which will continue to assist United Nations organizations in improving their practices, procedures and systems.

D. An analysis of the resource mobilization function within the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2014/1)

10. The objective of the review is to examine the status of resource mobilization in United Nations organizations and identify good practices. The aims of the report were to (a) map out the existing resource mobilization strategies/policies within the United Nations system organizations; (b) identify experience and good practice related to their implementation; (c) explore the coordination within and among entities in headquarters and in the field; (d) review the functioning and staffing of resource mobilization units/offices; and (e) seek to understand the perspective of major Member State contributors.

UNICEF comments

11. UNICEF takes note of the report on resource mobilization within the United Nations system, and has already made progress on the recommendations therein. UNICEF concurs with the report on the importance of core, or regular, resources as

the bedrock of the organization. Core resources allow organizations to plan ahead; be strategic and responsive; strengthen accountability, transparency and oversight; advance United Nations coherence and coordination; and provide predictable, differentiated services to respond to the needs of all children, particularly those in the poorest and most vulnerable communities. In addition to advocating for regular resources, UNICEF encourages resource partners to contribute earmarked funds that are multi-year, flexible and aligned with the Strategic Plan, 2014-2017.

E. Review of capital/refurbishment/construction projects across the United Nations system organizations (JIU/REP/2014/3)

12. The objectives of the review are to examine current practices, procedures and modalities in selected projects for refurbishment or construction of administrative buildings, mainly in headquarters. The report further aims to assess current differences and shortcomings, and identify lessons learned and best practices that may enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of project processes across the United Nations system.

UNICEF comments

13. UNICEF welcomes the report and its recommendations. With reference to the planning of refurbishment and new construction projects, UNICEF would like to note that UNICEF makes every effort to apply updated space guidelines, which reflect the new, more cost-efficient advancements in information technology, communication, furniture and energy-efficiency.

14. Furthermore, environmental, energy-efficient and sustainable aspects could be incorporated into Capital Master Plans, with the aim to have buildings that are green, work-friendly, flexible and accessible for all (including persons with disabilities).

F. Review of the Post-Rio+20 review of environmental governance within the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2014/4)

15. The objectives of the review are to assess how United Nations system organizations promote policy coherence, improve efficiency, reduce unnecessary duplication and enhance coordination and cooperation of activities related to environmental governance. The report further aims to determine how the systemic consolidation of strategies in the environmental sector is occurring in the context of sustainable development.

UNICEF comments

16. UNICEF takes note of the report and supports the development of a common policy and related guidelines to prevent conflict of interest of members/experts participating in technical and scientific panels in the field of environment. UNICEF also takes note of the proposals for a system-wide framework of measuring and monitoring resources required for the implementation of environmental protection and sustainable development within the United Nations system organizations. In addition, UNICEF as an active participant in the United Nations Development

Assistance Framework (UNDAF) process, adheres to the United Nations Development Group guidance notes on mainstreaming environmental sustainability and the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development into the UNDAF process.

G. Review of the use of retirees and staff retained beyond the mandatory age of separation at United Nations organizations (JIU/NOTE/2014/1)

17. This review examines the use of retirees and the retention of staff beyond mandatory age of separation (MAS) in United Nations organizations. It delivers system-wide comparative analysis of overall policies and practices, based on available information, and identifies commonalities and differences, as well as good practices that could be replicated.

UNICEF comments

18. UNICEF welcomes the review on the use of retirees and staff retained beyond MAS in United Nations organizations. UNICEF notes that the percentages for United Nations organizations quoted in the report are significantly higher than those monitored in UNICEF, where — over the past three years — the average percentage of staff retained beyond MAS has been 9 per cent, with retirees accounting for 2 per cent of the individual consultant contracts and 1 per cent of temporary assistance contracts issued per year.

19. UNICEF notes that it has not yet set up organization-wide systematic means of gathering data, knowledge, or information from staff who are retiring, or have retired. However, some of its offices have developed standard operating procedures to capitalize on the knowledge of staff due to retire. Currently, UNICEF is exploring possible approaches to more systematically capture and share the knowledge of retirees based on good practices from other organizations.

Ongoing/forthcoming Joint Inspection Unit reports and notes

20. UNICEF is participating in ongoing JIU reviews scheduled for completion in 2015 and looks forward to presenting its comments on them to the Executive Board at its annual session of 2016. Below is the preliminary list of such reports:

(a) Review of system-wide joint programming and administrative arrangements of operational activities within the United Nations system (expected completion: 2015);

(b) Review of system-wide implementation of full and productive employment and decent work for all (expected completion: 2015);

(c) Review of public information policies and practices in the United Nations system (expected completion: 2015);

(d) Review of cooperation among United Nations Regional Commissions (expected completion: 2015);

(e) Comprehensive review of activities and resources allocated to climate change within the United Nations system (expected completion: 2015);

(f) Review of Safety and Security in the United Nations system (expected completion: 2015);

(g) Feasibility study on a review of the United Nations Special Political Missions (expected completion: 2015);

(h) Benchmarking framework for management and administration reviews in the United Nations system organizations (expected completion: 2015).

Annex 1

List of Joint Inspection Unit reports and recommendations

JIU report symbol	*Report title*	*Total number of recommendations contained in the report*	*Total number of recommendations of relevance to UNICEF*	*Total number of recommendations of relevance to the UNICEF Executive Board**
JIU/REP/2013/2	Records and Archives Management in the United Nations	6	6	1
JIU/REP/2013/3	Selection and appointment process for United Nations Resident Coordinators, including preparation, training and support provided for their work	3	2	0
JIU/REP/2013/4	Review of the management of implementing partners in United Nations system organizations	12	11	2
JIU/REP/2014/1	An analysis of the resource mobilization function within the United Nations system	5	4	2
JIU/REP/2014/3	Capital/refurbishment/construction projects across the United Nations system organizations	4	0	0
JIU/REP/2014/4	Post-Rio+20 review of environmental governance within the United Nations system	13	3	0
JIU/NOTE/2014/1	Use of retirees and staff retained beyond the mandatory age of separation at United Nations organizations	5	2	0

* For details of these recommendations, see annex 2.

Annex 2

Summary of the remarks of UNICEF on JIU recommendations addressed to the Executive Board

Relevant recommendations	*Remarks*
Records and Archives Management in the United Nations (JIU/REP/2013/2)	
Recommendation 6 The General Assembly and the governing bodies of the United Nations entities covered by this report should request the Secretary-General and the respective executive heads to present a corporate or joint project proposal to enhance RAM [Records and Archives Management] in a consistent way within their respective entities.	UNICEF agrees that this topic is of critical importance to UNICEF, as well as the greater United Nations system. UNICEF is interested in participating and following the same principles as defined by the United Nations family. It should be noted that UNICEF has approved an Enterprise Content Management project for 2014-2017, which will be informed by the recommendations made in this report, as relevant.
Review of the management of implementing partners in United Nations system organizations (JIU/REP/2013/4)	
Recommendation 3 The legislative bodies of the United Nations system should direct the executive heads of their respective organizations to prepare and submit to them an organization-specific comprehensive strategic framework for partnerships, inclusive of Implementing Partners, aligned to their overall corporate strategic objectives. Such framework should include an analysis of resources required to operationalize it.	UNICEF notes this recommendation and supports the concept of a comprehensive partnerships framework. A strategic framework for partnerships was presented to the Executive Board in 2009 and an expanded framework for partnerships was submitted in 2012. Through its Strategic Plan, 2014-2017, UNICEF has worked to align overall organizational goals with its implementing partners to address long-term goals of partners and future strategic plans of UNICEF.
Recommendation 5 The General Assembly, in the context of the QCPR and in line with the ongoing effort to develop a common United Nations framework for measuring progress in national capacity development, should commission a system-wide study to take stock of the effectiveness and impact of Implementing Partner related approaches, initiatives and systems on strengthening national capacities and promoting national ownership in the delivery of programmes and activities for sustainable development.	UNICEF takes note of the recommendation and looks forward to the findings of the system-wide study.

Relevant recommendations	*Remarks*
An analysis of the resource mobilization function within the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2014/1)	
Recommendation 1 The legislative bodies of the United Nations system organizations should periodically review the resource mobilization strategy/policy, including by providing political guidance and oversight of the implementation of the resource mobilization strategy/policy and by ensuring monitoring and the review of regular updates.	In accordance with Executive Board decision 2014/17, UNICEF will organize on an annual basis at a formal session of its Executive Board, a structured dialogue with Member States to monitor and follow up on the predictability, flexibility, and alignment of resources provided for the implementation of the Strategic Plan, 2014-2017, including information on funding gaps.
Recommendation 2 The General Assembly of the United Nations and the legislative bodies of the United Nations system organizations should request Member States, when providing specified contributions, to make them predictable, long-term and in line with the core mandate and priorities of the organizations.	In accordance with Executive Board decision 2014/17, UNICEF is committed to continuing to work with resource partners to make contributions predictable, flexible, and in line with the Strategic Plan, 2014-2017. UNICEF advocates for regular resources and earmarked contributions that reduce transaction costs; are assigned resources at the beginning of a planning period (with multi-year duration); and have streamlined and harmonized reporting and evaluation. Pooled funds such as thematic windows that are directly aligned with the Strategic Plan Outcome Areas and Humanitarian Action are prioritized.